



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INEZ MOORE TENENBAUM
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
District Test Coordinators

FROM: Theresa G. Siskind, Director
Office of Assessment

DATE: December 8, 2005

RE: Update on Assessments

Best wishes for the holiday season. The information in this newsletter provides the most current information from the Office of Assessment about various testing programs. **Please share this information with all appropriate staff members in your district.** Copies will be sent only to the addressees above.

General Information

The Ad Hoc Committee on State Assessment Education and Public Works Committee has prefiled Bill H4328 http://www.scstatehouse.net/cgi-bin/web_bh10.exe?bill1=4328&session=116. Please share the bill with appropriate personnel in your district. Should you wish to comment, send your comments to Sandy Smith at SMS@SCHOUSE.NET.

Testing Schedules

The test administration schedules for 2005–06 and 2006–07 years were included with the August update memo. The schedules are also posted on the Office of Assessment Web page under Test Dates:

<http://www.myschools.com/Offices/assessment/documents/TestingDates110804.pdf>

Spring 2006 Workshops

Spring workshops are scheduled for January and February 2006. The HSAP, EOCEP, ITBS/CogAt, and ELDA programs will be featured during the first workshops which be held at the Columbia Conference Center on January 24, 25, and 26. PACT, South Carolina Readiness Assessment, and Performance Tasks for Gifted and Talented (Project STAR) presentations will be made February 21, 22, and 23, 2006 - also at the Columbia Conference Center. Registration forms for the January workshops will be sent out by mid-December.

Test Security Agreement Form

The Office of Assessment has updated the Agreement to Maintain Test Security and Confidentiality forms that all persons handling test materials are requested to sign before the 2005–06 administrations. The forms now reflect the addition of the ELDA assessments and the deletion of the BSAP program. Copies of the two forms are available within the "What's New?" section of the

Assessment page: <http://www.myscschools.com/offices/assessment/> or as a link on the PACT Web page.

Districts are requested to have all persons sign and date the forms following their attendance at the required district or school training session. DTCs should collect all signed forms and retain them within the district office.

Precode Project for PACT and HSAP

Contact: Christina Schneider 803-734-8534 cschneid@sde.state.sc.us

The Precode Project provides the student enrollment and demographic data to the contractors for the testing programs. This year, the precode data submission will occur as a component of the quarterly data collection process. The data collection name will be QDC 2/Precode and the data will be submitted through the SWEET tool.

The Office of Technology will produce automated feedback reports for the Precode print phase and update phase. The reports will be available the morning following data submission. DTCs should register for a myscschools account or update their existing accounts so that they may view the precode reports for their district. The precode manual and power point presentations from the precode workshop that include directions for registering and updating your account information may be found on the following Web site: <http://www.myscschools.com/offices/assessment/Precode/index.htm>. DTCs are now able to access feedback reports from QDC 1 provided that all information in the myschools account has been updated.

The SASI precode data determines the testing materials that will be sent for each student for the 2006 test administrations. A few changes were made to SASI precode fields for this year (Customized Test Booklet fields and the English Proficiency field). It's important that you make sure the data are accurately input into SASI.

As a reminder, please note that the default for the Sorting Field variables is the advisor unit. If schools do not enter data into each of the Sorting Fields, then the test materials for that school will be packaged according to the information given in the advisor unit field.

Important Dates

QDC 2/Precode (QDC 2/P) - January 3–19, 2006 - This is the print phase; information from this upload will be used to preprint PACT and HSAP test booklets and answer documents. It also determines the number of materials sent to each school and district.

Update Phase - March 10–17, 2006 - During this time period you can add any new students who have moved into your district or make changes to demographic information for your students.

SASI AltID-1

The SUNS number is the new, unique, ten-digit state ID number that is automatically assigned when a student enrolls or transfers into your school. (The SUNS number appears in the AltID1 field in the student atom of SASI). The SDE will collect the new SASI student ID number and the old district student number in Spring 2006. For 2006–07, the SASI student ID number will no longer be used.

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT)

Contact: Susan Creighton 803-734-8535 screight@sde.state.sc.us

Change in Materials Produced

In previous years, the Office of Assessment has produced and distributed *Sample Items*, *Sample Item Guides*, and *Pact Score Report User's Guides* for schools and districts. These documents **will not** be produced for the Spring 2005–06 test administration. Instead, the office will develop a brochure for distribution to schools and parents and release additional PACT test items. These items will be posted to the Web prior to the test administration in Spring 2006. The *Sample Items* and *Sample Item Guides* developed in 2005 will be posted to the Web site under the What's New? category and on the PACT Web page.

DRC's Online Enrollment Verification System

DRC's *Online Enrollment Verification System* will be open from December 5, 2005–January 17, 2006. DRC sent a memo to DTCs, dated November 18, outlining how to use the system to verify student and teacher enrollments and to order specific materials that may not be available through Precode. Please do not wait until the last day of the enrollment window to submit your information and orders.

As in 2005, the Secure Administration Manuals (SAMs) are not included on the enrollment system. If needed, the DTC can submit an Additional Materials Request to order more SAMs at no cost.

Charging for Late Orders

Districts are charged for PACT test materials (except SAMs) ordered after the submission of the precode file. The last day to submit the precode file is **January 19, 2006**. Districts will not be charged for test materials ordered for new students who enroll after the file is submitted.

PACT Spring 2006 Testing Schedule

Monday, May 8, 2006	ELA - Day 1
Tuesday, May 9, 2006	ELA - Day 2
Wednesday, May 10, 2006	No testing - state holiday
Thursday, May 11, 2006	Mathematics
Monday, May 15, 2006	Science
Tuesday, May 16, 2006	Social Studies
Wednesday, May 17, 2006	Fieldtesting
Monday, May 22, 2006	Last day for make-up testing
May 15 and May 24	Test materials are returned

Please note that PACT testing will be held on both Mondays of the two-week testing window. Monday testing could not be avoided this year due to an agreement regarding test dates with the Legislature and school closing schedules.

Make-up Testing

Four days are available for make-up testing: May 12, 18, 19, and 22. Although not encouraged, a maximum of two tests may be given to a student in one day (two make-up tests or one operational and one make-up test). However, unless the student has an IEP that specifically states that the test will be administered over multiple days, a student must begin and complete the test on the same day. Therefore, administering two tests in one day would reduce the amount of time a student can work on each test and could deflate the student's score. Please be attentive to individual student considerations when scheduling make-up tests.

Receipt of Materials

Districts will receive their PACT testing materials the week of April 10 or April 17, 2006 depending on the district size and holiday schedule.

Field Tests

There are two major changes for the 2006 field test. First, grades 1 and 2 will **not** be included in fieldtesting because of the phase-out of off-grade-level testing. The second change is the **inclusion of all ESOL** students in the field tests for all subjects because the Office of Assessment is conducting a study of different types of enhancements to facilitate test-taking for students with limited English proficiency skills. Students may notice items in this field test that are very different from the types they are used to seeing. Teachers will alert students about the unusual items when they read the scripts to the students on the field test day.

Notifications of the field test samples for each school will be provided to DTCs in February 2006.

PACT Ruler

In response to comments from teachers, the following changes have been made to the PACT mathematics ruler.

- A zero was added at the beginning - inches and metric.
- The ½ inch of white space has been removed from each end.

A pdf. file of the updated ruler will be posted to the Office of Assessment Web page under the "What's New?" section and as a link to the PACT Web page.

Elimination of Constructed-Response Items for Science and Social Studies

In response to a recommendation from the Testing Task Force, the constructed-response items have been eliminated from the science and social studies tests. This will be in effect for the Spring 2006 test administration and will include all grades (3–8). In addition, the number of constructed-response items on all grade levels of the mathematics test has been reduced, totaling no more than 10 percent of the test.

PACT Answer Documents for Science and Social Studies

As recommended by the Testing Task Force, answer documents will be used in grades 3–8 for the science and social studies tests beginning with the Spring 2006 test administration. Scannable test booklets will be used for all grades in ELA and mathematics.

The answer document for science and social studies is a four-page folder with the student demographic information on the front cover and inside front cover. The answer bubbles are on the

back cover. The test items will be alternately lettered ABCD (or ABC for any 3-option items) and FGHI (or FGH for any 3-option items). A sample of each answer document will be loaded to the Web page for viewing and downloading in December. The documents will be highlighted under the "What's New?" section and will be posted to the PACT Web page.

PACT Science

For Spring 2006, the PACT science test will be based on the 2000 Science Curriculum Standards.

In Fall 2006 the new 2005 Science Academic Standards should be implemented in the classroom for curriculum and instruction.

For Spring 2007, the PACT science assessment will be based on items that align to grade level standards in **both** 2000 and 2005 standards documents, and with standards that were addressed at one grade-level lower in the 2000 than in the 2005 standards. For example, in the 2000 Curriculum Standards the muscular-skeletal system was a 6th grade standard (II.D.1.a). In the 2005 Academic Standards the muscular-skeletal system is a 7th grade standard (7-3.2). The muscular-skeletal system **will be** eligible for testing in 7th grade since students will have had the opportunity to learn this standard in both the 6th and 7th grades.

Teachers will have one year to acclimate to the new standards before they are fully assessed on the Spring 2008 PACT test.

PACT Off-Grade-Level Testing

Contact: Courtney Foster 803-734-3552 cjfooster@sde.state.sc.us

Off-grade-level testing is being phased out in compliance with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education regarding the provisions of the No Child Left Behind legislation (see memorandum from Susan DuRant and myself dated September 19). For the 2006-2007 school year, off-grade-level assessment will no longer be an allowable testing modification.

Responses to frequently asked questions regarding the phase-out of off-level assessment can be found on the Department Web site at

<http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/Programs/AMC/documents/FinalOff-Gradelevel.doc>

Precode Information for Alternate Assessments

Contact: Douglas Alexander 803-734-3923 dgalexan@sde.state.sc.us

HSAP-Alt and PACT-Alt assessment windows were adjusted this year to accommodate a census field test of the new alternate assessment during the spring of 2006. The AA codes extracted during the QDC 1 data collection were used to identify students who are participating in alternate assessment.

The alternate assessment (AA) field identifies students for whom only alternate assessment is appropriate. The AA codes extracted during the QDC 1 data collection were used to identify students for shipping HSAP-Alt test materials and PACT-Alt return shipping materials; however, errors in AA field coding should be corrected as soon possible to provide correct coding for later

precode extractions. **It is important to utilize the AA code of “4” for students who meet the criteria for alternate assessment, but who will not be assessed this school year because of their age.**

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests–Alt (PACT-Alt)

Contact: Suzanne Swaffield 803-734-8274 sswaffie@sde.state.sc.us

Portfolios are due to the contractor March 3, 2006.

High School Assessment Program-Alt (HSAP-Alt)

Contact: Douglas Alexander 803-734-3923 dgalexan@sde.state.sc.us

Test Administrator Training

Training for teachers who will be conducting HSAP-Alt during the 2005–06 administration is scheduled as follows.

December 6, 2005	Greenville	Palmetto Expo Center
December 7 and 8, 2005	Columbia	Holiday Inn Centre at USC
December 9, 2005	Charleston	Charleston Convention Center

All teachers who are conducting the assessment must be trained to score the student's performance. Registration information for the training sessions was sent to the DTCs for Alternate Assessment on October 21, 2005. The testing window for the HSAP-Alt assessment will be January 17 through February 24, 2006.

South Carolina Readiness Assessment-Alternate Scoring (SCRA-Alt)

Contact: Courtney Foster 803-734-3552 cjfoster@sde.state.sc.us

The *Alternate Scoring Supplement* for the SCRA Development Guidelines is now available on the Department Web site at

http://www.myschools.com/offices/assessment/Programs/SCRA-alt/documents/SCRAGuidelines_Final.pdf

South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt)

Contact: Suzanne Swaffield 803-734-8274 sswaffie@sde.state.sc.us or
Douglas Alexander 803-734-3923 dgalexan@sde.state.sc.us

The current alternate assessments, PACT-Alt and HSAP-Alt, will be replaced with the South Carolina Alternate Assessment (SC-Alt) during the 2006–07 school year. Prior to the operational administration of this assessment, the tasks developed for the new assessment will undergo a field test administration. The census field test of ELA and mathematics will take place March 20 through April 28, 2006. Science and social studies will be field tested during the fall of 2006.

The purpose of this field test is to ensure that the tasks are written appropriately, the accompanying manipulatives are user-friendly for students and teachers, and the results adequately represent the ability of students. The SC-Alt field test will involve the administration of nine different sets of assessment tasks in each content area, ELA and mathematics. The field test is not an assessment

of students, but of the tasks in the alternate assessment. It is important for each task to be tried out by a number of teachers and students in order for all tasks to be adequately tested.

The field test process requires that teachers complete an ELA and mathematics pre-identification questionnaire for each student who is currently assessed with the PACT-Alt or HSAP-Alt to provide a profile of the student's ELA and mathematics skills. Some students who are eligible for alternate assessment but who are not of the age to be assessed will also be included in the field test. Based on the responses to the questionnaires, each student will be assigned a field test form that should be appropriate for his/her ability. This process will not be used for the operational assessment, but is required for the field test only.

The pre-identification for science and social studies field tests will take place during the fall of 2006.

Information on the field test pre-identification process was sent to District Test Coordinators for Alternate Assessment on November 30. Responses are due back by December 23, 2005 to the contractors.

Training for teachers who will be administering the SC-Alt field test will be held in regional sessions, March 6–14, 2006.

High School Assessment Program (HSAP)

Contact: Nancy Whitlock 803-734-0664 ncwhitlo@sde.state.sc.us

Differences in HSAP Summary Reports and SDE Web Page Reports

The HSAP testing contractor produces HSAP summary reports that include all students who take the HSAP tests. The numbers in these summary reports **may differ** from the numbers posted on the Web site after the official release of the spring HSAP scores. For more information on posted HSAP scores, AYP and report card calculations, please contact David Burnett in the Office of Research at 734-8215.

HSAP Fall 2005 Score Reports

The Fall 2005 HSAP data files and score reports will be shipped by PEM for district receipt by December 16. No summary reports are produced for the fall administration.

Release of HSAP Prototype Forms

In December, the SDE will release one prototype for each subject tested in HSAP (English language arts and mathematics). We are referring to the HSAP release forms as prototypes because they are representative of forms that will be administered in the future. The release form has not been administered as an intact form. Therefore information is not available concerning the number of items needed to score levels 1–4.

HSAP Spring 2006 Testing and Reporting Dates

The HSAP Spring 2006 test dates are as follows:

Tuesday, April 25, 2006	ELA – Session One
Wednesday, April 26, 2006	ELA – Session Two
Thursday, April 27, 2006	Mathematics
Friday, April 28 – Friday, May 5	Make-up testing
Wednesday, May 10	Last date for return of ALL materials

Ordering Spring 2006 HSAP Test Materials

The PEM SchoolHouse online system will open for initial orders of HSAP test materials on Monday, February 6. SchoolHouse will be open for additional material orders from Friday, March 31–Friday, May 12. Questions regarding materials orders should be directed to PEM.

Linking Labels

Linking labels on a student's ELA and mathematics test booklets are required when a student's test booklets are not pre-labeled or when pre-printed labels were not produced for that student. **When linking labels are used, students will be required to hand-code their names on both ELA and math booklets.** For test booklets processed with linking labels, ELA and math scores will be matched for individual students ONLY IF the number on the linking labels for both booklets is the same AND IF the student last name and student ID match exactly.

Early Return of HSAP Spring 2006 Test Materials

Districts selected for early return will receive notification letters from AIR in March. Some districts will be asked to return testing materials early for all schools in their district, while others will be asked to do an early return only for designated schools.

Spring 2006 Graduation Express Returns

The HSAP Spring 2006 administration is the second to include graduating seniors. To ensure prompt processing of these students' tests, please make sure that the following steps are followed:

- School Test Coordinators darken the "Graduation Express" bubble on the School Header Sheet for test booklets of graduating seniors, and
- District Test Coordinators return all graduation express materials no later than Friday, April 28, following the return procedures for graduation express outlined on pages 22 and 23 of the Test Administration Manual.

End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP)

Contact: Lane Peeler 803-734-8282 lpeeler@sde.state.sc.us

The new 2005 Academic Standards for Physical Science and Biology 1 become effective for EOCEP beginning in Fall 2006. The Fall 2006 EOCEP tests for these subjects will be aligned to the new 2005 Academic Standards for Physical Science and Biology. The 2006 tests for Spring and Summer will reflect the 2000 standards.

Online Testing Gains Popularity

With each administration, additional districts and schools are opting to test students online rather than with paper and pencil. Approximately 13,000 tests are currently scheduled to test online during the Fall 2005/Winter 2006 EOCEP test administration.

Comparability Studies

Five districts participated in a very small comparability study during the Spring 2005 EOCEP administration. An executive summary of the findings of this study accompanies this update.

A second, larger study will be conducted during the Spring 2006 administration of EOCEP. Additional information about the study will be provided at the January 2006 testing workshops.

U.S. History and Constitution Field Test

All schools will be included in a field test for U.S. History and Constitution during the Spring 2006 administration. Specific information will be provided at the January 2006 testing workshops.

Use of Calculators During the Physical Science EOCEP Test

The guidelines for using calculators on Algebra 1/Mathematics for the Technologies 2 now apply during the Physical Science test. Beginning with the Fall 2005/Winter 2006 administration, calculators may be used by students on the Physical Science test. This information is not included in the Fall 2005 EOCEP Test Administration Manual because the manuals were printed prior to this change of policy.

SWEET Query for Spring 2006

The dates for the EOCEP query will be provided in an e-mail to DTCs later in December.

Performance Beacon

Contact: Lane Peeler 803-734-8282 lpeeler@sde.state.sc.us

Nancy Whitlock 803-734-0664 ncwhitlo@sde.state.sc.us

Performance Beacon is replacing Lighthouse. Performance Beacon has enhanced data analysis functions that will allow users to build comparisons among districts and schools using a variety of variables found in the EOCEP and HSAP data as well as analyze content strengths and weaknesses using strand level information for both testing programs. While the AIR Lighthouse Web site will remain available, the 2005 EOCEP and HSAP data will only be found on the Performance Beacon. The current Lighthouse will be left in place with the data it currently uses for EOCEP (spring 2003 and 2003-04) and HSAP (spring 2004). Performance Beacon will be released by January 23 and will include the data currently in Lighthouse as well as the most recent EOCEP data (fall 2004 through summer 2005) and the most recent HSAP data (spring 2005).

South Carolina Readiness Assessment

Contact: Jim Casteel 803-734-8293 jcasteel@sde.state.sc.us

It is now the beginning of the winter rating period, according to the following windows for SCRAPI ratings:

Fall	October to November 30
Winter	December 1 to February 28
Spring	March 1 to April 30
Year End	May 1 to June 9

Please note: When teachers use SCRAPI for the first time for the year, they should use the Create New Account button, not their old login and password. Also, when they have entered all of their information (just name, school, email, and SASI id number) they must click on the final Create New Account button on the last page. They will then receive their login and password in an email.

Performance Tasks for Gifted and Talented (Project STAR)

Contact: Amelia Brailsford 803-734-8019 abrailsf@sde.state.sc.us

Important upcoming dates for the 2005–06 administration and scoring of the South Carolina Performance Tasks follow.

January 25, 2006	Student data due to Carolinian Consultancy
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Performance Tasks Contacts (PTCs) must register for 1 session on February 13th or 15th.

February 13, 2006	SC Performance Tasks Training – Columbia Session 1: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon Session 2: 12:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. for new PTCs only
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February 15, 2006	SC Performance Tasks Training – Columbia Session 3: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon Session 4: 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
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March 6 – 21, 2006	Administration of SC Performance Tasks
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March 22, 2006	Return of SC Performance Tasks Materials to Carolinian Consultancy
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May 15, 2006	SC Performance Tasks Scores in districts
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English Language Development Assessment (ELDA)

Contact: Chris Webster 803-734-5721 CWebster@sde.state.sc.us

We are happy to announce that Chris Webster has joined the Office of Assessment. He will manage the ELDA.

Each district Superintendent should identify the ELDA DTC for their district. A form for naming the ELDA DTC for spring 2006 is enclosed with the Superintendent's paper copy of this memo.

ELDA DTCs will be able to order test materials from Measurement Incorporated using a new online ordering system. This system will allow district staff to select schools in their district with a drop down list and order the appropriate quantities for each school at each grade cluster.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Contact: Therese Gleason Carr 803-734-3747 tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

The 2005 NAEP results were released on October 19, 2005. South Carolina results are available on the NAEP page on the Office of Assessment Web site. For comprehensive information on state and national results for the NAEP 2005 assessment, please consult The Nation's Report Card Web site: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

The 2006 NAEP testing window is from January 30 to March 10, 2006. Selected schools have been notified of their participation. NAEP assessment staff will contact these selected schools to schedule pre-assessment visits by December 16. School packets with student lists and teacher questionnaires will be shipped via FedEx on December 30. Pre-assessment visits from NAEP assessment staff will take place at selected schools by January 20.

School coordinators must send the parent notification letter home with all students in the targeted grade before the scheduled assessment in January 2006. Please fax one copy of the final dated parent notification letter for each school to the SDE Office of Assessment at (803) 734-8886 by January 18, 2006. NAEP Assessment Administrators will administer the NAEP during the assessment window.

Achieving Accurate Results for Diverse Learners (AARDL) Grant Project

Contact: Therese Gleason Carr (803) 734-3747, tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

The Accommodation Station pilot study is currently underway. The pilot study includes a student, teacher, and parent component. Students participate in two online administrations of the web-based Accommodation Station within a two-week testing window. During each administration of the AS, students complete a short section of reading and math items and respond to survey questions about their learning and testing preferences.

In addition, two teachers per student respond to a set of survey questions about what students know and can do, and what accommodations are most beneficial to them. One general education and one special education teacher respond to the survey questions about each individual student. The

parents/guardians of participating students also answer a similar set of questions about their children. The pilot study will help us determine the utility and reliability of the AS.

A number of districts are participating in the study, but several more elementary schools with third and fifth graders in LD self-contained and/or resource classrooms are still needed. Please contact Therese Carr at tcarr@sde.state.sc.us if you are interested in taking part in the study. Participating teachers will receive stipends for the purchase of instructional materials. Thanks to all of the districts who are already supporting the study!

ITV

Contact: Therese Gleason Carr (803) 734-3747, tcarr@sde.state.sc.us

The Office of Assessment is again airing a television series in the 2006–07 year. This series is designed for teachers and administrators and provides an overview of various aspects of the statewide testing programs.

The *Assessment Informational Overview* series will be televised on channel 318. Each program will air on listed dates at 9:30 A.M. The series may be videotaped for use by school and district personnel. Below is the programming schedule for the first part of the year.

NAEP 2005 Results/2006 Assessment Overview - January 9 and January 13

The 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress results were released on October 19, 2005. This presentation will provide a summary of South Carolina's results and what can be learned from them. In addition, the presentation will include an overview of the 2006 NAEP assessment, including NAEP pre-assessment visits, accommodations, and administration.

Accommodations and Modifications - February 6 and February 13

Allowable testing accommodations and modifications to ensure appropriate access to state assessments for students with disabilities and English language learners will be discussed. Additionally the program will include an overview of the new South Carolina Alternate Assessment, SC-Alt, which will be field tested during the spring and fall of 2006 and implemented in the spring of 2007.

Test Security – March 6 and March 13

This presentation will include a discussion of the importance of test security and outline test security procedures. Specific test security regulations will be highlighted. The presentation will conclude with a summary of the procedures to follow when reporting and documenting a test security violation.

Universal Design of Assessments – April 3 and April 10

Recently, universal design of assessments has gained increasing attention as a strategy for making large-scale assessments more inclusive for diverse learners. This presentation will provide an overview of universally designed large-scale assessments. First, the need for universally designed assessments will be discussed. Second, specific elements of universally designed assessments will be identified and defined. Example test items will illustrate the application of universal design principles to item writing and item review. Finally, the

presentation will offer suggestions for applying principles of universal design to classroom assessment.

In addition to broadcasting one program a month as listed above, ITV will broadcast the four fall programs in a block feed (all four back to back on each date) on January 18, February 16, and March 15 from 8:30–2:30 P.M. (may end before this time) on channel 318.

The professional development series, *Assessing Standards in the Classroom*, the 11-part series, hosted by Christina Schneider and myself from the Office of Assessment and Robert Johnson from the University of South Carolina is available through video streaming at ITV at the following Web site: <<http://cfmedia.sctv.org/itvprodev/index.cfm>>.

Teacher Quality Research Grant for 2005–06

Contact: Dawn Mazzie 803-734-4430 dmazzie@sde.state.sc.us

The Teacher Quality Research Grant provides professional development in classroom assessment for 31 participating middle schools. This year, the grant is supporting 174 grade 6 teachers and their students. Assessment coaches in half of these schools have been trained in classroom assessment and are now responsible for training the participating teachers at their respective schools with the assistance of the SDE staff. The coaches will be returning to Columbia to be trained in grading participating teacher assessments on December 6, 2005; January 21, 2006; January 30, 2006; and March 11, 2006.

Each participating middle school administered the School Quality Benchmark Mathematics Assessment between October 24 and November 2, 2005, and mathematics teachers from these schools participated in professional development in interpreting the test results November 30–December 2, 2005. The professional development was offered by the Office of Assessment staff and sponsored by the Office of School Quality. The School Quality Benchmark Assessment in reading was administered the week of November 28, 2005, and the professional development for this assessment is scheduled for January 31–February 2, 2006. In each professional development session, teachers will contrast the answers to questions given by high scoring and low scoring students to better understand the differences in how students demonstrate their understanding of the standards and to identify overall strengths and weaknesses of their students.

Enclosures: ELDA DTC Form
EOCEP Comparability Study